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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



[*The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this Department.*]

BUSINESS METHODS AND PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

WOULD it not be well if business methods were in more common use in our professional societies?

If a woman in a country town sends an order, let us say to John Wana-maker, she may not receive her goods for a portion of a week, but she does receive by return mail a card stating that her order has been filed and will be given prompt attention.

If, however, a nurse sends an application, written in due form, for membership in a professional association it goes into the silence and the night.

To prove that I am not exaggerating, I will cite a veritable case.

A nurse who has been invalidated home for overwork returns, after three years' absence, to her former field of labor. She has followed the fortunes of her profession through the pages of the JOURNAL and knows that her school has formed an *alumnæ* association, that the graduates of the different schools have banded together as a city club for the benefits of registry and for social and professional advantages, and also that a State association has been formed.

She wishes to become a member of all these societies, both because her interests lie that way, and because she knows she must do so in order to maintain her professional standing.

She first makes application to the City Club in the required form, giving references to members and physicians. She knows that it may be a month before she can be admitted. The month goes by and the weeks accumulate until another month has gone. The nurse thanks Heaven that the men whom she knew before remember her and give her work to do. At first she had felt reasonably sure of admission to the club, but she now becomes anxious about it. "However," she says to herself, "they have not said 'No' any more than 'Yes.' I will go to see them."

She does so, and is pleasantly greeted by the secretary. After a somewhat prolonged search among various other papers the secretary says: "Oh, yes, here is your application. It is going to be all right, but one of the physicians to whom you referred has not yet replied to our inquiries."

A telephone message to the forgetful physician sets the matter right, and at the end of another fortnight the nurse receives notice that she will be admitted into membership in the club on the payment of dues.

One of the first things she had done on her return was to visit her Alma Mater, and on this occasion the superintendent of nurses had urged her to become a member of the *Alumnæ* Association of the school, and she had promised to do so as soon as she had gathered up the scattered threads of her work. At the end of two months she sends the *Alumnæ* Association a written application for membership. One month goes by in silence and then another. There

chances to be a meeting of the State association at which the nurse finds herself sitting beside the secretary of the school alumnæ, who is also a graduate of her own year. She turns to her and says, "Did you receive my letter?"

"Oh, yes," the secretary smilingly replies

Nurse (indignantly).—"Then why didn't you answer it?"

"Why, I suppose I should have. It rained so hard last month that we didn't have a meeting. We are going to have one to-morrow night and then I will speak about your application." After the meeting "to-morrow night," which is in February, the nurse receives a card stating that her application has been received and will be considered at the business meeting in May.

This nurse has also sent a written application for membership to the State association. And what has become of that? Nothing can be told except that it has been sent. Its fate is shrouded in silence and mystery. The nurse has a philosophic hope that after the lapse of a few months she will be notified that she "will be admitted into membership on payment of dues."

In all these cases would it not have been more courteous, as well as more business-like, to have promptly acknowledged the receipt of the application?

GRADUATE.

DEAR EDITOR: I hear that the American nurses in Rome have all gone back to America, and a nurse now living in Europe, not connected with the Roman enterprise, but knowing all about it, writes me as follows:

"The business of the nurses has been shockingly mismanaged. My own opinion is that it is putting nurses in a false position to bring them out to take care of wealthy people on ten francs a day (two dollars) and the nurse to receive seventy-five francs (fifteen dollars) a month as her salary. Most people who go abroad are able to pay the same money for a nurse that they would in America. I think if they attempt to reopen the Home again it's a thing that ought to be taken up, because there are many American nurses abroad trying to live and nurse for the benefit of travellers, and they ought to have protection against cheap nursing."

Would not one of the nurses who have returned from Rome give an account of the management? It appears to be antiquated and behind the times. Nor can I understand why the wealthy Americans who travel abroad should be planned for as if they were charity cases, to have trained nurses at reduced rates.

L. L. DOCK.

PARIS, June 25.

[LETTERS to the Editor must be accompanied by the name in full and address of the writer, otherwise such communications cannot be recognized. The name need not appear in the JOURNAL unless so desired.—Ed.]

